

Please note - this chapter is part of a larger work that argues for all of the spiritual gifts to still be valid in the present church age. Certain terms and references used here are defined earlier in the thesis. Cessationist, as used here, is one who does not believe all the gifts are active today, and charismatic, as used here, is one who does. Thus, I am a charismatic. Enjoy...and see you Sunday.
Pastor Steve

CHAPTER NINE THE BAPTIZING WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

One teaching is so closely related to charismatic theology, and thus so criticized by cessationists, that its expounding is warranted here. This concerns the doctrine of the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit, sometimes called the baptism “in” or “with” the Spirit. For purposes here, no distinction will be made simply on the choice of preposition, though some writers do make an issue on this point.¹ This baptism is not a secondary experience after salvation. Such a view therefore is in agreement with the cessationists, and in opposition with most charismatics.

In proving this claim, another criticism of charismatics by cessationists shall be eliminated. To that end, the same cessationists that have been consistently opposed throughout this work (Unger, Walvoord, MacArthur) are now used in support. Charismatics need to redefine the experience they commonly call the baptism of the Spirit, and in so doing will eliminate much of the cessationist criticism they experience.

The ultimate desire is to make sure one’s belief system matches what the Bible actually teaches. The bulk of this work has argued that the cessationist is in error with Scripture. The charismatics’ beliefs must also equate to what the Bible teaches in context and fullness.

¹ Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Joy Unspeakable: Power and Renewal in the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1984), 23,27.

The Problem

John MacArthur has written:

One of the cardinal doctrines held by Charismatics is the necessity for a “second work of grace,” commonly called the “baptism in the Holy Spirit.” Charismatic writers and teachers are all agreed that you need the baptism.²

MacArthur is too broad in asserting all charismatics are united in this belief. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that charismatic teachers in general do emphasize such a second work, and this work is commonly identified as the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

However, the baptism of the Holy Spirit as an act subsequent to salvation is not a necessary requirement for the charismatic view on gifts. One can believe all spiritual gifts are still operative today, in this present dispensation, without involving himself in the controversy over the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The cessationist writers focus much of their challenge to charismatics on this subject. If those charismatics who believe the baptism to be a subsequent experience are in error with the Bible, the cessationist’s appeal is that the charismatic must also be in theological error on the gifts. This is a logical fallacy. While it is understandable why the cessationist would correct this error, it does not reinforce other cessationist views. The two issues are separate.

Argument for a Baptism Subsequent to Salvation

A case can be made for a subsequent baptism at some point following salvation. Bible teachers like Dr. R.A. Torrey and Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones have embraced this view. MacArthur himself has the highest of praise for Lloyd-Jones and his uncompromising

² MacArthur, *The Charismatics*, 119.

stand for Scripture.³ The main issue is to examine the transition from the gospels to Acts through a dispensational theology.

On the day of His ascension to heaven, Jesus told the apostles they would be “baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:5b). Therefore, they had not yet received this baptism. Torrey points out that Jesus had already pronounced these same apostles to be “clean” in John 13:10, and later repeated they were “already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you” (John 15:3). Torrey declares this as proof they were already regenerate men.⁴ After Jesus’ resurrection, John tells us Jesus “breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 20:22). At this point they believed the gospel, including His resurrection. It also seems logical that if Jesus “breathed” and commanded them to receive the Holy Spirit, that they indeed received the Holy Spirit. There is little justification for arguing Jesus was just giving a preview of Pentecost.

The issue is not whether the apostles were already saved. The key is to understand the uniqueness of the apostles as being part of a dispensational transition. The Church did not begin until Pentecost in Acts two. Therefore, when Jesus declared the apostles clean before His crucifixion, it would have been from the perspective of the prior dispensation. For example, if Peter had been killed on the night of the Lord’s betrayal, he would have joined John the Baptist and the rest of the Old Testament saints.

Jesus made it clear that the Helper, the Holy Spirit, would not come until Jesus had departed to the Father, when they would see Him no more (cf. John 16:7-11). This

³ John MacArthur, *Pastoral Ministry: How to Shepherd Biblically* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 300.

⁴ R.A. Torrey, *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1910), 149.

refers to the “Promise of the Father” mentioned by Jesus when promising the baptism of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:4-5). Thus, the reception of the Holy Spirit mentioned in John twenty should likewise be associated with the Spirit’s ministry in the Old Testament, and not the new ministry to take place at Pentecost. Much like David and others, the apostles were saved, and they had the Holy Spirit to aid them, but this should still be understood from an Old Testament perspective, specifically the dispensation of law.

Therefore, an argument simply from these passages, that the baptism of the Spirit is subsequent to a Christian’s salvation, ignores the uniqueness of the apostles in their dispensational transition. Moses lived for eighty years before the institution of the dispensation of Mosaic Law, and he too experienced the transition from one dispensation to another. Adam, Noah, and Abraham were all saved individuals that also experienced dispensational transitions. Transitional characters are unique, and one must be careful building doctrine that would apply to all, based solely on their experiences. For the Bible to support a subsequent experience as the baptism of the Spirit, there must be evidence beyond the initial apostles, and after the birth of the Church in Acts two.

There are other instances in Acts, pointed to by those arguing for a post-salvation baptism. Two are dealt with here. The first concerns the ministry of Philip in Samaria in Acts eight. He made many converts in Samaria, and the Scripture then declares:

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17).

Clearly, a mighty experience happened to these new Christians. As believers they already had the Holy Spirit dwelling within them (cf. Rom. 8:9). The reception of the Spirit

described here, falling upon them, was something powerful and recognizable to others. However, nowhere does the text label this experience as the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The baptism that is referenced in these verses is water baptism after their belief in Christ (cf. Acts 8:12), but otherwise the word baptism in connection with the Holy Spirit is lacking.

The second example concerns the salvation experience of Saul of Tarsus, known later as Paul. Paul was converted on the Damascus road (cf. Acts 9:3-9). However, the Lord later sent a disciple named Ananias to Paul for a specific purpose.

And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized (Acts 9:17-18).

This remarkable experience took place after his conversion, yet nowhere does the Bible describe what happened to Paul as the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The phrase that is used is the filling with the Holy Spirit. The reference here to his being baptized is again water baptism, and temporally occurs after the healing and filling with the Spirit, upon arising. Paul was healed and filled with the Holy Spirit instantaneously, and then he got up and went to be baptized in water. Neither of these two examples from Acts is described as the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit Defined

A dispensational theology is crucial when discussing the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Walvoord explains why this is so:

The principal cause of disagreement is found in the common failure to apprehend the distinctive nature of the church. Many theologians regard the

church as a universal group of saints of all ages, some extending even these boundaries to include in the conception all who outwardly belong to it, even if not saved. If this concept of the nature of the church is held, the baptism of the Holy Spirit has no relation to it...If, however, the church be defined as the saints of this age only, the work of the Holy Spirit in baptizing all true believers into the body of Christ takes on a new meaning. It becomes the distinguishing mark of the saints of the present age, the secret of the peculiar intimacy and relationship of Christians to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is, therefore, essential to a proper doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit that it be recognized as the distinguishing characteristic of the church, the body of Christ.⁵

Since there are relatively few passages in the New Testament that describe the baptism of the Holy Spirit, it is both possible and necessary to look at each one to understand a proper definition.

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free-and have all been made to drink into one Spirit (I Cor. 12:13).

Here the baptizing work is done by the means of the Holy Spirit, and it is universal in scope. The work is the placing of the believers into the body of Christ. The context for this verse is significant for Paul is emphasizing the unity of the body, despite the diversity of gifts found among the members.

Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-4).

Unger notes three significant results of baptism derived from this passage. The context involves the previous chapter, where Paul contrasts the believer's relationship to Adam, versus his relationship to Christ. Therefore, the baptizing work of the Spirit both

⁵ Walvoord, 138.

disconnects the believer's position in Adam, and identifies the believer as now in Christ.⁶

The third observation is the baptism is the basis for the new holy walk of the believer.⁷

This passage is often equated with water baptism. Yet, Unger also explains:

This, however, does not mean that water baptism bears no relationship to Spirit baptism. On the contrary it is the symbol of the baptism of the Spirit, which effects union with the body of Christ and identification with Christ. In other words, water baptism is the symbol of the *cause* or *means* of union with Christ rather than the result of it or the portrayal of the process of salvation, and as such always underlies the spiritual reality.⁸

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all (Eph. 4:4-6).

If one opposes Spirit baptism being the reference in this verse, the alternative would be water baptism. The implication would be that one must be baptized in water to be saved. All the other references are absolutes in the lives of a believer, thus precluding this as a reference to water baptism. The result then is recognition that all believers have experienced the Spirit baptism.

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead (Col. 2:11-12).

The reference to circumcision is to the spiritual reality that has happened to the believer because of his position in Christ, and not the ritual act of circumcision itself. Therefore, one logically should see the baptism here as also representative of the spiritual reality, and not the ritual act itself. All believers have been both circumcised in Him (Jesus), and buried in baptism with Him.

⁶ Merrill F. Unger, *The Baptizing Work of the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton: Van Kampen Press, 1953), 84-85.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 87.

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26-28).

Spirit baptism is the reference here, for if water baptism was the focus, then Paul would be teaching that only those who have been baptized in water are sons of God. This is untenable. Once again, the universal scope of all believers is seen in this reference to Spirit baptism. The baptism is “into” Christ.

Having exhausted all of Paul’s doctrinal references to the baptism of the Spirit, the final references derive from the book of Acts. While there are multiple references to the ritual of water baptism in Acts, the baptism of the Holy Spirit only occurs twice.

The first of these has been discussed, and is found in chapter one, when Jesus promises the apostles will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days (cf. Acts 1:5). This promise was fulfilled at Pentecost in chapter two. Though the term, baptism of the Spirit, is not found in that second chapter, the context indicates this event fulfilled what Jesus was predicting. This event marked the birth of the Church. The apostles so baptized were believers, but under an Old Testament perspective, until that moment.

The second and final mention is when Peter quotes Jesus, while explaining to the Jews why he had gone to visit Gentiles, namely Cornelius and his household.

“And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ If therefore God gave them the same gift as *He gave* us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” (Acts 11:15-17).

Peter connects the powerful experience upon the Gentiles, as they began to speak with tongues and magnify God, as also the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This was a seminal moment, for it was the first instance of God opening the door of salvation to Gentiles, and

Peter's Jewish audience realized the significance (cf. Acts 11:18). However, it must be noted, that the baptism of the Spirit, associated with these Gentiles, was contemporaneous with their salvation, and not subsequent to it.

This exhausts the express teachings found in the New Testament concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit. These passages do not teach that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a secondary work of grace, after salvation, empowering the believer in a special way and providing various spiritual gifts. Unger provides the definition.

The baptism is the divine operation of God's Spirit which places the believer in Christ, in His mystical body, the church, and which makes him one with all other believers in Christ. The baptism makes them one in the life of the Son of God Himself, sharing His common salvation, hope, and destiny. Thus, this major Bible theme concerns intimately and vitally the believer's position and experience, his standing and state.⁹

The key idea within this definition is one of identification. Implicit in this definition is the fact that this baptism takes place at the moment of salvation, and is not repeatable.

Why the Confusion

Some charismatics might take issue with the limited references to Acts discussed above. The term, baptism of the Holy Spirit, is often applied to passages where it does not belong. This is due to extrapolating too much from the Pentecost event at the birth of the Church, and the episode concerning Cornelius in chapter ten.

It is agreed that the experience of the apostles at Pentecost can be equated with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In keeping with the earlier definition, this was the moment when the apostles were placed "in Christ." Because of their unique status as transitional characters between dispensations, they are the only Christians in Scripture who could be

⁹ Unger, *The Baptism and Gifts*, 21.

classified as saved before the baptism. Such salvation is understood as akin to the Old Testament saints, and not the new dimension of union with Christ that comes with the baptism they later experienced.

A specific detail is mentioned in connection with this event, concerning the role of the Holy Spirit. The Bible says the apostles “were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (cf. Acts 2:4). The filling with the Spirit took place at the same time as the baptism of the Spirit. However, the two must not be the same event, for this filling of the apostles with the Holy Spirit is repeated in Acts, with no mention of the baptism. After praying to God for boldness, subsequent to the arrest of Peter and John in chapter four, the Scripture says:

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31).

The Cornelius account is the second clear reference to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. As was shown, this does not harm the chosen definition, for this was the moment of conversion for Cornelius and his household. However, as with Pentecost, there is a crucial detail associated with this event, concerning the Holy Spirit.

The Bible says, “the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word” (Acts 10:44). The Greek word translated, upon, is $\epsilon\pi\alpha\rho\epsilon\iota$. Much is made of the use of this preposition, and confusion has resulted, for there are other instances in Acts where the Holy Spirit comes upon ($\epsilon\pi\alpha\rho\epsilon\iota$) believers.

Jesus uses the preposition in His prediction to the apostles in chapter one:

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Given that this was a prediction of what took place at Pentecost, it is proper to describe what happened to the apostles when they spoke in tongues as the Spirit coming upon them. Therefore, in both instances where the baptism of the Holy Spirit is referenced, the teaching is that the Spirit came upon those receiving the baptism.

However, it is too much to then conclude that every event in Acts where the Spirit comes upon (ἐπέκειντο) someone is synonymous with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Two other instances are often associated with the baptism of the Holy Spirit by charismatics, though the Bible does not make such a claim.

The first concerns the revival taking place in Samaria. The Scripture declares:

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17).

It is not necessary to insist these were not already saved, and such a view is quite contrary to the chapter's earlier details. These had believed Philip's preaching, and were then baptized in water. To insist they were unsaved, one would have to explain away the declaration that they had "believed," and then assume Philip mistakenly arranged the water baptism of multitudes of unbelievers. One also would have to explain how they then became saved simply by the apostles laying on of hands, since no comment is made to the apostles preaching the gospel.

Since the Spirit indwells one at the moment of salvation, the reception of the Holy Spirit here must refer to the subsequent filling of the Spirit, as He came upon (ἐπέκειντο) them. This event is not referenced here as the baptism of the Spirit. The conclusion is the

better terminology would be the filling of the Spirit. The $\square\pi\square$ experience in Acts should connect to the filling, not the baptism.

The second instance involves those in Ephesus who had only known the baptism of John, and admitted not even hearing of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 19:1-3). The Bible continues:

Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:4-6).

Here there seems little doubt that these were unbelievers until Paul explained Christ to them. As was with Cornelius, the Spirit came upon ($\square\pi\square$) them at the time of their salvation. Therefore, they were baptized into Christ at this moment, but also filled with the Spirit, as seen through the demonstration of their spiritual gifts.

In conclusion, it is best to equate the Spirit coming upon a believer, as the filling of the Holy Spirit, and not a secondary baptism of the Spirit. When a Christian today has a new, powerful, experience with the Holy Spirit, possibly involving the speaking in a foreign tongue, he should not think he just experienced the baptism of the Spirit as a secondary work of grace. As a Christian, he already had the baptism of the Spirit, and the better term for explaining what just took place is the filling of the Spirit.

The Filling of the Spirit

R.A. Torrey has written:

A man may be regenerated by the Holy Spirit and still not be baptized with the Holy Spirit. In regeneration there is the impartation of life by the Spirit's

power, and the one who receives it is saved; in baptism with the Holy Spirit, there is the impartation of power, and the one who receives it is fitted for service.¹⁰

The challenge to Torrey's claim has already been shown, but the significance of the quote is the idea of power, making one fit for service. Jesus did describe the baptism of the Spirit to come as power for the apostles, enabling them to be witnesses around the world. However, it has been shown what happened at Pentecost was the apostles being filled with the Spirit, when He came upon them (cf. Acts 1:8; 2:4).

Nowhere does the Scripture ever command a Christian to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Nowhere, outside of the unique dispensational transition of Acts chapter one, are believers ever commanded to wait for the baptism of the Spirit. If Torrey was correct, and the baptism of the Spirit was needed to impart power for service for Christ, then surely the Bible would command it.

What the Bible does command believers is to be filled with the Spirit, and this verse must be studied in depth.

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

It is significant that Paul contrasted the filling with the Spirit to drunkenness in this verse, for one who is drunk is under the power of something external to the individual. The alcohol overtakes the person's natural abilities, but in a negative manner. When one is filled with the Spirit, he is under the Holy Spirit's power, in a positive manner, as God literally works through the individual for His purposes.

The Greek verb translated, be filled, is a present-tense imperative, and in the passive voice (πληροσθε).¹¹ The force of the present tense for this imperative is to command the action as an ongoing process.¹² As MacArthur states:

¹⁰ Torrey, 150.

Being filled with the Spirit is a daily challenge. You can be filled today, but tomorrow is another story. That is why the whole concept of a “second blessing” is inadequate. When the “second blessing” wears off, the Charismatic believer is left wrestling with the same basic problems faced by all Christians: while he is saved, he still exists in a human body that has a strong propensity towards sin.¹³

The Christian who experiences what he calls a second blessing is actually experiencing the filling of the Spirit, and thus it is logical for the exercise of a spiritual gift to be included with the experience.

The English translation, “with the Spirit,” can lead astray. The use of the preposition, $\epsilon\upsilon\upsilon$, coupled with Spirit being in the dative case ($\pi\nu\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\mu\alpha\tau\iota$), suggests means, not content. There is not one New Testament example where this verb for filling ($\pi\lambda\eta\rho\acute{\omega}$) is followed by $\epsilon\upsilon\upsilon$ and the dative, where content is warranted.¹⁴ Therefore, if the Christian understands Paul to be speaking of agency, the Holy Spirit is the means of the filling. The result then is the power of the Holy Spirit, through the believer’s life.

In addition, the passive voice implies consent, or permission, on behalf of the believer.¹⁵ There are some prerequisites on the part of the Christian, before he can be empowered with the filling of the Holy Spirit. Unger explains what he calls “the Bible prescription for power” by four recognitions. These are (1) knowledge of one’s position and possessions in Christ, (2) faith to act upon this knowledge, (3) yieldedness to God’s will and obedience to Scripture, (4) prevailing prayer.¹⁶ A.W. Tozer provides four steps leading to being filled with the Holy Spirit. First, one must present his body to God (cf.

¹¹ Perschbacher, 332.

¹² Wallace, 485.

¹³ MacArthur, *The Charismatics*, 191.

¹⁴ Wallace, 375.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 440-41.

¹⁶ Unger, *The Baptism and Gifts*, 163-72.

Rom. 12:1-2). Second, one must ask to be filled. Third, one must be willing to obey the Scriptures in their entirety.¹⁷ Finally, one must have faith, which Tozer explains thusly:

We receive Him by faith as we receive the Lord in salvation by faith. He comes as a gift of God to us in power. First He comes in some degree and measure when we are converted, otherwise we couldn't be converted. Without Him we couldn't be born again, because we are born of the Spirit. But I am talking about something different now, an advance over that. I am talking about His coming and possessing the full body and mind and life and heart, taking the whole personality over, gently, but directly and bluntly, and making it His, so that we may become a habitation of God through the Spirit.¹⁸

These quotes are not meant as simply a formula, but show the similarity in how many charismatics behave when seeking the baptism of the Spirit as a secondary blessing. They typically have confessed all known sin, and are earnestly asking God in prayer, by faith. God apparently may fill such a Christian, even though that sincere believer is using the wrong theological terminology.

The concern to the erroneous doctrine of a second blessing is twofold. First, the charismatic having this experience may not recognize the need for the perpetual filling for living a life of victory over sin, and service unto Christ. He may think he has arrived, thus leading to pride or possibly opening himself to even a greater fall. The second problem is that many Christians “tarry” for this experience, and if they do not receive the tongues gift, walk away in defeat, assuming something is wrong in their relationship with God. Every Christian is commanded to be filled, but not all will receive the spiritual gift of tongues or any other dramatic manifestation, for it was shown these gifts are distributed solely by the will of the Sovereign God. The present tense participles that follow this command (cf. Eph. 5:19-21) speak to the result of the filling, and do not

¹⁷ A.W. Tozer, *How to be Filled with The Holy Spirit* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, n.d.), 47.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 48.

reference the gifts at all.¹⁹ Instead, Paul mentions such results as singing, giving thanks, and submitting to one another.

Baptism Versus Filling in Greek

In anticipation of objection to the distinction made, an analysis of the Greek words concerning baptism and filling is warranted. The words for baptism (βάπτισμα) and to baptize (βαπτίζω) derive from the word, βάπτω.²⁰ It has the specific meaning, to dip, and often was used in connection with dying a fabric.²¹ The papyri evidence contains several supports for this usage.²² It is from this root idea that the connotation of identification for the word baptism derives. If one dipped a white tunic in purple dye, he then had a purple tunic. The tunic experienced a “βάπτω,” and is then identified simply as a purple tunic.

The ritual of water baptism is meant as a symbol of identification with the Lord’s death and resurrection. The believer is lowered into the watery grave, and raised up again to walk in newness of life as a public follower of Jesus Christ. In other New Testament usages of the word, baptism, the issue of identification is present.²³

Therefore, the baptism of the Holy Spirit should be seen as an identification, and such a view fits the argument described in detail above. Every believer experiences this baptism at the moment of salvation, as he is placed into the body of Christ, thus being

¹⁹ Wallace, 638-39.

²⁰ Strong, 18.

²¹ BDAG, 165-66.

²² Moulton, 103.

²³ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1992), 312-13.

identified as “in Christ.” Nowhere in this definition is there room for the idea of being empowered for service.

However, the Greek word translated as “filled,” does suggest such a definition. While this word, πληρώω, has a variety of nuances in meaning, its primary definition is simply to fill, whether of things or persons. When used with persons, as is the case here, it speaks to powers and qualities.²⁴ Therefore, it is quite appropriate to understand the filling with the Holy Spirit as the empowerment of the Holy Spirit for the Christian.

The Bible commands Christians to be filled with the Holy Spirit, but never commands the baptism of the Spirit. The filling is a necessity, if the Christian is to live a life that glorifies the Lord in word and deed. He needs the power of the Holy Spirit for the victorious Christian life. Related to living that life for Christ is the use of whatever spiritual gifts God has given him. Seeking the baptism is not commanded Christians, for they already received it at salvation when they believed the gospel, and became identified as being “in Christ.”

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²⁴ BDAG, 828.